

Establishing a Multistate Research Project “Best Practices” Guide

The purpose of multistate research projects is to conduct research by institutions in multiple states to solve problems that concern more than one state. The multistate research project provides the benefit of structure and visibility to the research endeavor. At some institutions being a member of a multistate research project releases funds that can be used to plan and conduct the research program. Project members do NOT have to have formal experiment station or research appointments. Further, members do NOT have to be located at a Land-Grant institution in order to participate. Formal membership is open to all scholars who have an interest in the research topic.

What follows is a list of “best practices” identified by members of our profession who have created, lead, and/or participated in successful multistate research projects. These steps are suggested for consideration by others who wish to form multistate research teams.

1. Form a core team
This should be a team of 4-5 members who are committed to the research idea and are committed to the establishment of the multistate research project. The project team will be open for others to join later, but our experience is that a smaller core team is better able to navigate the establishment process.
2. Identify a core team leader
A single person should be identified to coordinate the establishment of the team. This person should be responsible for contacting an institution’s experiment station director to gain support for the idea of establishing the team and will serve as the main point of contact for the experiment station directors through the creation of a Multistate Research Project.
3. Core team proposal drafting meeting
After initial conversations, which can occur by distance (phone, Skype, etc.), it is recommended that the core team hold a face-to-face meeting to work on drafting the proposal. The core team leader should bring to the meeting information on the development process gathered from the sponsoring experiment station director’s office. The planning meeting should be viewed as a working meeting where time will be set aside for team members to work on drafting the proposal. If possible, team members should be given assignments on which section of the proposal he/she should be prepared to draft so that needed preparation work can be done prior to arrival at the meeting. Key components of the proposal are:
 - Statement of the Issue(s) and Justification
 - Related Current and Previous Work
 - Objectives
 - Methods
 - Measurement of Progress and Results
 - Projected Participation
 - Outreach Plan

- Organization and Governance
 - Literature Cited
4. Establishment of official Project Development Committee
Once the proposal is drafted, the core team leader should share it with his/her experiment station director for submission for the establishment of an official Development Committee. Once approved as a Development Committee (DC), the project will be assigned an official DC number in NIMSS and an administrative advisor will be assigned. This administrative advisor is an outstanding resource for the team as it completes the development process and works to accomplish the goals of the research team.
 5. Hold official Development Committee meeting
This is another face-to-face meeting that is approved and announced through NIMSS. Attendance at this meeting is open and it is suggested that announcements about the meeting be shared across the AAAE Listserv. Additionally, it is recommended that core team members individually invite other potential members who could contribute to the project. The goal of this meeting is to finalize the proposal and begin plans for how to execute the work. This may include brainstorming or drafting grant proposals or outlining specific research studies to address the goals of the larger project.
 6. Approval and Establishment of the Multistate Research Project
Once the DC proposal is approved, the project will receive an official multistate research project number in NIMSS. Membership to the project will be open to any that wish to join and contribute to the project. The project is required to meet at least annually to monitor progress on the project. The project administrative advisor will be a great asset in this process. The project is required to submit an annual report via NIMSS within 60 days of the meeting.
 7. Project close out and/or renewal
Multistate projects are typically approved for a 5-year time span. Projects may be proposed for approval to start at any time of the year. However, it is desirable that a project's starting date be October 1, the first day of the federal fiscal year (FFY). The termination date for all projects will be September 30, the end of the FFY. At the end of five years, the project will complete a close out report on the progress the project made toward its stated goals. At this time, the project may complete the application process for another 5-year time span.

Searching for a Project in NIMSS Using Keywords

- Go to the NIMSS website: nimss.org
- Type any keyword in the box under **Search NIMSS** and then click **Search**
- Click **View** next to any project that you would like to learn more about
- Clicking view on a project will take you to the project outline. There is also a **Project Menu** on the left with section to learn more about the project.

Hatch Multistate Project Initiation

To Join a Multistate Project in NIMSS:

- Go to the [NIMSS website](#)
- Select “Member Login & Registration”
- Insert your User ID and Password
- On the Left-hand Menu Column, select "Participants “→”Draft/Edit” →Particip. Info", →“Draft New “Begin typing that project number and select the full name of the project when it appears.
- Complete the form (notice the hyperlinks for accessing research and extension codes)
- Click "Submit"

To Create a Multistate Project in REEPort

The following form is necessary for creating a multistate project:

- [Project Statement](#)
- Send the Project Statement to the office of your Experiment Station Director

Complete the following steps for a multistate project:

- Go to the [USDA/REEport Website](#)
- Log in with your username and password
- Click “REEport”
- Click “Project Initiation”
- Click “Create a New Project”
- Select “Hatch/Multistate” from the “Select Funding Source” drop-down menu
- Select Multistate Project Number/Title from the drop-down menu
- Read and confirm the statement of understanding, then click “Next”
- Fill in the necessary and/or applicable fields marked with an asterisk:
 - Project Number: State Abbreviation-PD’s Last Name (e.g. FLA-Smith)
 - Start Date: should be current or future date
 - Note: The “?” button next to each category provides helpful guidance
- Fill in the names of any additional project directors and their home departments
- Enter Goals and Objectives
 - Note: The “More.” link provides guidance for completing each section
- Enter Products and Outputs
- Enter Expected Outcomes
- Enter Target Audience
- Enter Methods
- Enter Non-Technical Summary
 - See the “More...” link for a description of summary requirements
- Enter Keywords
- Complete Classification section
 - See [NIFA Classification Manual](#) for guidance and available codes
- Complete Assurance Statements
- If any sections are incomplete, click associated red hyperlink to access and complete
- When complete, click “Submit for Review”
- The REEport coordinator will then review your project for submission to USDA